

NOTES ON *NASSODONTA INSIGNIS*.

By EDGAR A. SMITH, F.Z.S., etc.

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THE species under consideration was described by H. Adams in the Proc. Zool. Soc. 1866, p. 445, and figured on pl. xxxviii, fig. 8. He created for its reception the new genus *Nassodonta*, which he placed in the family Buccinidæ, but without offering a comparison with any particular section of it. After carefully studying his diagnosis, I fail to discover any characters which may not be found in the genus *Nassa* taken in a broad sense; indeed, many forms in that group are far more widely separated from one another, than *Nassodonta* is from several of them. He described the outer lip in these words: "labrum acutum, intus incrassatum et dentatum, extus antice denticulo instructum." In the diagnosis of the species no further mention is made of the latter character, but the teeth within the labrum are said to be two in number. On examining Mr. Adams's type specimen in the Museum, it will at once be seen that the above diagnosis is very inaccurate. In the first place, there are four distinct denticles, and that which is said to be "extus," does not in fact exist. Certainly on the acute margin of the lip, at the termination of a groove, which passes round the base of the body-whorl, there is a feeble dentiform prominence, which, however, cannot be described as a denticle on the outside (*extus*). Similar but more distinct marginal denticles are met with in *Nassa glans* and some other species. The animal and operculum are unknown. The allegation of its occurrence in fresh water (a statement which I shall presently show to be very doubtful) did not warrant Mr. Adams in separating it from *Nassa*, for fluviatile and marine species do, in a few cases (e.g. *Neritina*), occur in the same genus. Fischer (Man. Conch., p. 635) doubtfully considered it a section of *Canidia*. Tryon, however (Man. Conch., vol. iv, p. 37), has placed it in *Zeuxis*, a subgenus of *Nassa*, a location with which I fully agree.¹

With regard to the locality assigned to this species, I think there is also some mistake. It is given by Adams "River Peiho, China, in company with *Velorita*." As far as I can ascertain, the genus *Velorita* occurs only on the west side of the Indian Peninsula, in the neighbourhood of Cochin, and in the estuary of the River Kundapur, where it is largely eaten by the natives. It has never been found in China, and the original locality "Japan," quoted by Gray, evidently is also an error. I should here mention that on a label accompanying Mr. Adams's specimen of *Nassodonta*, the locality is thus written: "Peihoi,

¹ Martens also suggested *Nassa*. Zool. Rec. 1866, p. 179.

fresh water, Calvert, with *Velorita*." It seems to me quite possible that "Peihoi," which is very different from "Peiho River," as rendered by Adams, may be some small village on the Malabar coast. Whether this be so or not, there is no doubt that this species really does occur at Cochin, for in the collection of the late Dr. Francis Day, bequeathed to the British Museum, there were four specimens from that locality. Judging from those four examples, this species, like other estuarine forms, appears to be very variable as regards both size and shape. The largest specimen (12 mm. in length) somewhat exceeds the dimensions given by Adams, whereas the smallest, although adult, is only 7 mm. long. The proportionate stoutness and the height of the spire also vary considerably.